St Mary's Catholic Academy
16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy 2026-27

St Mary's Catholic Academy is a caring faith community. Our mission is to provide an outstanding whole-person education through which all are challenged to grow in wisdom, understanding, self-esteem and closeness to God.

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education. There are two types of bursary:

- Vulnerable bursary – up to £1,200 per year from the DfE allocation, subject to an individual assessment of the student's actual financial need and eligible participation costs.
- Discretionary bursary – awarded to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment.

Eligibility

To be eligible for support from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund, students must:

- Be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2026; or
- Be aged 19 or over and either have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or be continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18. Students aged 19 or over are eligible for the discretionary bursary only; and
- Meet the residency and eligibility requirements set out in the ESFA/DfE funding guidance for 16 to 19 students.

If there are changes in circumstances that may affect eligibility for a bursary, applicants and/or parents/carers must notify the school without delay.

Vulnerable Bursary

To apply for a vulnerable bursary, students must be in one of the following defined vulnerable groups:

- In care;
- Care leavers;
- In receipt of Income Support (or Universal Credit in place of Income Support) because they are financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them, such as a child or partner;
- In receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right.

Students must provide evidence that they are eligible, for example, a letter from DWP stating the benefits to which the student is entitled, or written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority.

Please note that students who meet these criteria are not automatically entitled to a bursary if they do not have financial needs and/or their financial needs are covered from another source. There is the possibility of no award or a limited award.

Discretionary Bursary

Discretionary bursaries may be used to support essential costs of participation in a student's study programme, subject to individual assessment of financial need and actual costs. Examples may include:

- Purchase of books/equipment
- Purchase of specialist clothing
- Purchase of laptop
- Purchase of a bus pass for travel to and from sixth form
- Contribution towards food costs where the student has an identified financial need and the cost is not otherwise covered by free meals or another source of support
- Essential curriculum-related activities or trips required to achieve or support study programme goals or course objectives
- Contribution to cost of attending university open days and interviews
- UCAS registration or other application costs
- Other costs deemed appropriate by the Discretionary Bursary Panel

Eligible students may apply for a discretionary bursary. Applications will be assessed against the Academy's eligibility criteria, household income criteria and the student's individual financial need and actual participation costs.
This is a limited fund and two bands of eligibility will apply. Household income will be considered as part of the eligibility assessment. Band 1 students will be prioritised within the Academy's available funding, but all applications will remain subject to an assessment of individual financial need and actual participation costs. Meeting the income threshold does not in itself create an entitlement to a bursary or determine the amount awarded. All awards will be based on an individual assessment of the student's actual financial need and the essential costs of participation.

- Band 1 - students identified as eligible for free school meals and student carers
- Band 2 - students with a gross annual household income of below £40,000

Students must provide evidence that they are eligible, for example, proof of household

income or benefits, a young carers assessment or evidence of Carers Allowance.

The Discretionary Bursary Panel (Headteacher, Head of 6th Form and Trust Business Manager) will meet on a termly basis to review applications received. Please note that submitting an application does not guarantee a full award.

Where possible, the academy will pay for resources and provide them to the student e.g. a Chromebook. If this is not possible, a payment will be made to the student before the start of each half term to cover the costs of, for example, a bus pass. Where financial support is provided directly to students, payments will be calculated from the student's assessed actual participation costs and will not be made at a flat or fixed rate.

To continue to receive support, students must maintain attendance above 90% (exceptional circumstances will be taken into consideration) and comply with the behaviour for learning policy.

There is no set limit for the amount of discretionary bursary that can be awarded to students. We will base all decisions around which students receive a discretionary bursary, and how much bursary they receive, on each student's individual circumstances and their actual financial need.

We will review each student's eligibility position each academic year. Students will only continue to receive a discretionary bursary if they continue to satisfy the criteria.

Applications

All bursary applications and supporting evidence will be treated confidentially and handled in accordance with the Academy's data protection and confidentiality procedures.

Applications should be made by students online through the Academy website.

The application form will require information and evidence relating to eligibility, household income where applicable, and the student's actual financial needs and essential participation costs.

Students must sign a declaration confirming that the information provided is accurate and complete.

Evidence should be passed to the Finance Team as requested.

Students who are dissatisfied with a decision regarding their bursary application may request a review in accordance with the Academy's complaints procedure.

St Mary's Catholic Academy

16 to 19 Bursary Fund Student Application Form 2026–27

Academic year: 2026–27
Please read the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy 2026–27 before completing this application.

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help eligible students overcome specific financial barriers to participation in education.

Applications are assessed individually. **Submitting an application does not guarantee that an award will be made or that the full amount requested will be awarded.**

All information and supporting evidence will be treated confidentially and handled in accordance with the Academy's data protection and confidentiality procedures.

---

1. Student Details

Student name: _____

Date of birth: _____

Address:

_____

_____

Postcode: _____

Telephone/mobile: _____

Student email: _____

Courses/study programme: _____

Year group: _____

Tutor: _____

2. Eligibility

Please tick the statement(s) that apply to you.

- ☐ I am aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2026.
- ☐ I am aged 19 or over and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

- ☐ I am aged 19 or over and am continuing a study programme I began aged 16–18.
- ☐ I meet the relevant residency and eligibility requirements for 16 to 19 funding.

If you are aged 19 or over, please note that you are eligible for the discretionary bursary only.

If you are unsure whether you meet the eligibility requirements, please contact the Finance Team before completing this section.

3. Type of Bursary

Please indicate which type(s) of support you are applying for.

- ☐ Vulnerable Bursary
- ☐ Discretionary Bursary
- ☐ I am unsure which bursary I may be eligible for

You may be asked to provide additional evidence depending on your circumstances.

4. Vulnerable Bursary

Complete this section only if you are applying for a Vulnerable Bursary.

Please tick the category that applies to you:

- ☐ I am currently in care.
- ☐ I am a care leaver.
- ☐ I receive Income Support or Universal Credit because I am financially supporting myself and someone who is dependent on me and living with me, such as a child or partner.
- ☐ I receive Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment in my own right **and** Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in my own right.

Evidence

Please indicate the evidence you are providing or have been asked to provide:

- ☐ Written confirmation of current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority.
- ☐ DWP letter confirming relevant benefits.
- ☐ Other evidence: _____

Please note: Meeting the vulnerable bursary criteria does not automatically guarantee an award. The Academy will assess your actual financial need and eligible participation costs. An award may be limited or may not be made where there is no identified financial need or where costs are covered from another source.

5. Discretionary Bursary

Please complete this section if you are applying for discretionary support.

Which eligibility band applies to you?

- ☐ **Band 1:** I am eligible for free school meals.
- ☐ **Band 1:** I am a student carer.
- ☐ **Band 2:** My gross annual household income is below £40,000.
- ☐ I believe I have a financial need but am unsure which band applies.

Evidence

Please indicate the evidence you are providing or have been asked to provide:

- ☐ Evidence of free school meal eligibility.
- ☐ Young Carers assessment.
- ☐ Evidence of Carer's Allowance.
- ☐ Evidence of household income.
- ☐ Evidence of benefits.
- ☐ Other evidence: _____

Household income is one part of the assessment. Meeting the relevant income threshold does not itself guarantee an award or determine the amount awarded.

6. What Financial Support Do You Need?

Please tick all costs for which you are requesting support.

- ☐ Books or other essential equipment
- ☐ Specialist clothing
- ☐ Laptop/Chromebook or other IT equipment
- ☐ Bus pass or other essential travel costs
- ☐ Food costs
- ☐ Essential curriculum-related activity or trip
- ☐ University open day or interview costs
- ☐ UCAS registration or other application costs
- ☐ Other essential study-related cost
- ☐ Other: _____

7. Details of Costs

Please provide details of the essential costs you are asking the Academy to consider.

Item/cost	What is it needed for?	Cost (£)	How often?

Total estimated cost: £_____

Where possible, please provide evidence of the actual cost, such as a quotation, invoice, course information, travel cost, equipment price or other supporting documentation.

8. Your Financial Need

Please explain why you need financial support and how the costs identified above are affecting, or may affect, your ability to participate fully in your study programme.

Please include any relevant information about your circumstances and why you are unable to meet these essential costs from other available resources.

9. Other Sources of Support

Please tell us whether any of the costs identified in this application are already covered, or partly covered, by another source of support.

- ☐ Free school meals
- ☐ Another Academy/college fund
- ☐ Local authority support
- ☐ Employer support
- ☐ Family/household support
- ☐ Other financial support
- ☐ None
- ☐ I am unsure

Details:

10. Circumstances That May Affect Your Application

Is there anything else about your financial or personal circumstances that you would like the Academy to take into consideration when assessing your application?

11. Supporting Evidence Checklist

Please provide the evidence requested by the Academy. Depending on your application, this may include:

- Evidence of identity/age, if requested
- Evidence of residency/eligibility, if requested
- DWP benefit evidence
- Evidence of looked-after/care-leaver status
- Evidence of free school meal eligibility
- Young Carers assessment
- Evidence of Carer's Allowance
- Household income evidence
- Evidence of the actual costs being requested
- Other supporting evidence requested by the Finance Team

Evidence should be provided to the Finance Team as requested.

12. Student Declaration

I confirm that:

- I have read, or have had explained to me, the St Mary's Catholic Academy 16 to 19 Bursary Fund Policy 2026–27.
- I have provided accurate and complete information in this application.
- I understand that the Academy may request evidence to verify the information provided.
- I understand that submitting an application does not guarantee that I will receive a bursary or that the full amount requested will be awarded.
- I understand that any award will be based on my individual circumstances, actual financial need and essential participation costs.
- I will notify the Academy without delay if there is a change in my circumstances that may affect my eligibility.

- I understand that continued discretionary bursary support is subject to meeting the Academy's requirements, including maintaining attendance above 90% except where exceptional circumstances are taken into consideration, and complying with the Behaviour for Learning Policy.
- I understand that my eligibility will be reviewed each academic year.
- I understand that bursary funding must be used for the approved purpose(s).

Student name: _____

Student signature: _____

Date: _____

13. Parent/Carer Confirmation

This section should be completed where appropriate.

I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, the information provided in this application is accurate and complete.

Parent/carer name: _____

Relationship to student: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

14. For Academy Use Only

Eligibility Assessment

Date application received: _____

Eligibility confirmed:

- ☐ *Yes*
- ☐ *No*
- ☐ *Further information required*

Bursary type:

- ☐ *Vulnerable*
- ☐ *Discretionary — Band 1*
- ☐ *Discretionary — Band 2*
- ☐ *No eligibility established*
- ☐ *Other:*_____

Evidence received and verified:

- ☐ *Yes*
- ☐ *No*
- ☐ *Further evidence required*

Financial Assessment

Household income: *£_____ per year*

Identified essential participation costs: *£_____*

Identified financial need: *£_____*

Other sources of support considered: *_____*

_____

Recommended award: *£_____*

Form of support:

- ☐ *Academy-provided resource/equipment*
- ☐ *Payment to student*
- ☐ *Other: _____*

Reason for decision / assessment notes:

_____

_____

_____

Discretionary Bursary Panel Decision

Date considered: *_____*

- ☐ *Award approved*
- ☐ *Partial award approved*
- ☐ *Application declined*
- ☐ *Further information required*

Approved amount: *£_____*

Payment/support arrangements:

_____

Review date: *_____*

Panel/authorised decision-maker: *_____*

Signature: _____

Important Information

The Academy has a limited bursary fund. All applications are assessed individually, and an award is **not guaranteed**.

Where possible, the Academy will purchase resources and provide them directly to students. Where this is not possible, payments may be made to students to meet assessed actual participation costs.

Students who are dissatisfied with a bursary decision may request a review in accordance with the Academy's complaints procedure.

Finance Team: Please return supporting evidence as requested.